

taken from under a stone. Mr. Gould thinks that, by destroying insects and their larvæ that may attack the ova and fry of fishes, these birds may do great service.

Mr. Macgillivray found beetles and water shells (*Lymnea* and *Ancylus*) and the larvæ of *Ephemera*, *Phryganea*, and other aquatic insects.

Sir W. Jardine, in his 'Birds of Great Britain,' says, "In one part of Scotland, sixpence per head is given for these birds. In another district, 548 were killed in three years." He adds, "The ova of any kind of fish we have never detected in the stomach or intestines; nor do we think that they habitually frequent the places where the spawn would be deposited; and if they did, we would deem it almost impossible that they could reach it after it was covered in the spawning-bed," &c.

So that I hope we may fairly acquit this interesting little bird of the depredations of which it has so often been accused; but I hope that we shall ere long see the Water-Ousel, with the Little Grebe (*Podiceps minor*), in the Society's fish-house, where a better opportunity will be afforded of learning its habits.

As is well known, this bird has been variously classed by different writers. Mr. Gould, in the work before quoted, says he regards *Cinclus* as one of the isolated forms of ornithology, and that it has some remote alliance with the genera *Troglodytes* and *Scytalopus* and their allies. In my next communication I hope, by a careful comparison of the skeleton of this bird with those of the other *Merulidæ*, to come to a more definite conclusion on this subject.

7. ON THE SYNONYMY OF *SISTRUM CANCELLATUM*.

BY W. HARPER PEASE, CORR. MEM.

We find a great discrepancy, as to the name of this species, among the several authors who have noticed it. It was originally described by Quoy and Gaimard (*Voyage de l'Astrolabe*, vol. ii. p. 563, pl. 37. figs. 15, 16) as *Purpura cancellata*.

The next author who noticed it was De Blainville in his *Monograph of Purpura*, *Nouv. Ann. du Mus.*, 1832, p. 221. He refers correctly to the '*Voyage de l'Astrolabe*,' but names it "*P. fenestrata*," possibly by mistake in copying. His name is consequently a synonym of *P. cancellata*. Deshayes, in his edition of Lamarek, gives the description as *P. fenestrata*, Blainv., referring correctly to the figure and description by Quoy and Gaimard, as well as to that of De Blainville. Kiener, most surprisingly, does not notice it. Reeve discards both the names of Blainville and Quoy & Gaim., but describes and figures it more correctly than had been done previously, under the name *P. elongata*, Blainv. We can find no description of such a species by De Blainville. In his *Monograph*, however, on pl. 10, fig. 9, a shell is figured to which he attaches the name *P. elongata*; but no corresponding description appears in the text. Dr. Gould, in his '*Mollusca of the U. S. Exploring Expedition*,' figures and describes the animal, following Reeve in naming it *P. elongata*, Blainv.; but he refers to

the description and figure given by De Blainville of *P. fenestrata*, and also quotes *P. fenestrata* of Quoy & Gaim., who make no mention of such a species. On comparing the above figures and descriptions, it will be found that they all refer to one species. The shell figured by De Blainville as *P. elongata* is a member of the same group as *P. cancellata*, which is represented by a number of species and varieties in the Pacific.

8. DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SPECIES OF LATIRUS, AND REMARKS ON OTHERS, INHABITING THE PACIFIC ISLANDS. BY W. HARPER PEASE.

Four species of *Latirus* inhabit the Pacific Islands. They possess in common the remarkable peculiarity of displaying, when wet or moist, bright iridescent hues of various colours, although there is but slight analogy between them as to other characters. As they are of rare occurrence, and as we have in our collection a full suite of perfect and mature specimens, we propose to revise and extend the previous descriptions. The species range, so far as we have ascertained, from the Carolines, through the Ralick and Radack groups, to the Kingsmill; thence south to the Tongas, and east over the small islands near the Equator, not reaching Tahiti. The first and most notable is

LATIRUS PRISMATICUS, Mart.

Although figured by Martyn, the original and (so far as we can learn) the only description of this species was given by Mr. Reeve in *Conch. Icon.*, under *Turbinella*, from a worn specimen. The figure of Martyn is not correct; but the colour is not exaggerated, nor can it be. Occasionally we have observed the tints change, and pass through several shades, while drying. We have seen specimens 3 inches in length. The following description is taken from a mature specimen:—

L. t. turrito-fusiforini, crassa, longitudinaliter plicato-costata, transversim nodoso-lirata; liris elevatis, supra costas compresso-angulatis; interstitiis concentricè tenuiter liratis, longitudinaliter squamuloso-rugosis; columella triplicata, callositate parva superne munita; labro simplici, acuto, intus lirato; fulva, liris nigro-purpureis, purpureo vel viridi vel cæruleo iridescentibus, intus crocata.

LATIRUS GEMMATUS, Reeve.

The iridescent colours of this species are the same as those of the preceding, but in a less degree. The white colour is confined to the left side of the nodules. To the description given by Mr. Reeve we add as follows:—

“*Longitudinaliter nodoso-plicata, transversim striata, nodis subrotundatis.*”